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Programme planning

Report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Summary

The present report provides an assessment of evaluation capacity across the Organization through an examination of evaluation functions, resources, outputs and their use. The report also identifies good practices which have contributed to more effective evaluations. In addition, the report presents both the findings derived from a sample of evaluation reports produced across the Organization in 2014-2015 and the evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for 2018-2019.

Results were mixed compared with those of the previous biennium. In this regard:

(a) There was some strengthening of evaluation functions;

(b) The number of entities with evaluation policies and plans increased, but adoption of appropriate procedures, including the tracking of an evaluation workplan, remained limited;

(c) While the number of evaluation reports produced by entities fell, their quality remained the same, and reported outcomes increased;

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(d) Budgeted allocations for discretionary self-evaluation far exceeded reported expenses on evaluation reports for half of all entities, suggesting inaccuracies in the reporting of evaluation budgets and the inclusion of activities other than evaluation under this banner.

Senior management support once again emerged as a determining factor for a strong evaluation function. Strategic timing, a participatory approach and the generation of usable recommendations enhanced the utility of evaluation reports.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/8 of 13 November 2015, endorsed, inter alia, the four recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as contained in the report on the work of its fifty-fifth session (A/70/16, paras. 99 and 104-106), that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take concrete steps to develop capacity and strengthen the culture for evaluation throughout the Organization. OIOS will report on progress thereon in the next report in 2019.

OIOS makes one important recommendation:

Budgeting of evaluation resources should be better aligned with evaluation plans, and evaluation outputs should better reflect such plans and budgets.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is the fifteenth in the series of studies submitted biennially since 1988 to the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in accordance with the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2016/6). The planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation cycle of the United Nations utilizes three sets of instruments: the strategic framework, to provide an overview of the Organization's activities; programme budget and programme performance reports, which provide workplans as well as monitoring and reporting on implementation; and the evaluation system, "which allows for continuing critical review of achievements, collective thinking thereon and formulation of subsequent plans".[1] In line with these regulations, this report:

(a) Describes and assesses evaluation structure, process and practice in the Organization (sect. III);

(b) Identifies good practices for impactful evaluations (sect. IV);

(c) Provides a summary of evaluations conducted during the biennium 2014-2015 and identifies key results from those reports, across the eight strategic priority areas of the Organization (sect. V);

(d) Presents the evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for 2017-2018 (sect. VI).

II. Methodology

2. This report is based on information gathered across the 31 United Nations entities subject to OIOS oversight.[2] The following data-collection methods were employed:

(a) Screening of 446 reports received from 25 entities; 273, from 21 entities, were screened in as evaluation reports;[3]

[1] ST/SGB/2016/6, para. 2 (c).

[2] The Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support shared a focal point and are treated as a single entity for the purpose of this report.

[3] Reports were screened if they met the criteria set out in the following questions: (a) did the date of the report lie between 1 January 2014 and December 2015?; (b) was the report authored by OIOS, the Joint Inspection Unit, the Board of Auditors or a donor? (criterion for exclusion); (c) does the report assess an element of the entity's performance relative to its mandate or goals?; (d) does the report include a description of the methodology (defined as encompassing data sources, data collection and analysis methods, limitations and underlying analytical assumptions)?; (e) does the report include a description of the evidence?; (f) does the report contain findings and conclusions?; and (g) does the report include a forward-looking element, such as recommendations or a plan of action?

(b) Quality assessment by two external consultants of a randomly selected stratified sample of 100 evaluation reports from 21 entities;[4]

(c) Document review of 26 policies, 20 workplans and 429 documents related to evaluation procedures;

(d) Web-based survey of focal points representing all 31 entities, including questions on capacity and procedures for evaluation, use of reports and recommendations, best practices and lessons learned, and risks faced by the entity, with a response rate of 100 per cent;

(e) Interviews with focal points from 29 entities;

(f) Survey and analysis of staff work-months allocation, usage and impact for each of the evaluation reports (20 entities, 249 evaluation reports);[5]

(g) Case studies on good practice;

(h) Financial resources analysis, in consultation with, and with guidance from, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, of data from individual sections of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015; the net total budget in the foreword and introduction to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015; and compiled Form 12 data from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts on breakdowns of financial allocations between monitoring and evaluation for 2014-2015.

3. The report is subject to several limitations:

(a) The document review and screening of reports was limited to the documents submitted by focal points;

(b) Where focal points were not evaluation staff members, some inaccuracies in reporting may have been introduced;

(c) Data on resources for and reports stemming from centralized and decentralized evaluation functions were, in some cases, aggregated;

(d) The methodology for assessing budget allocation towards outputs did not factor in time lags between budgeting, spending of resources and issuance of reports and outputs included in this assessment were limited to evaluation reports;

(e) There was significant variation across entities in respect of the accuracy and disaggregation of allocations for monitoring and evaluation; data derived from Form 12 were combined with data in the proposed programme budget sections to enhance the reliability of resource allocation measures across entities;

(f) Self-reported information from each entity was not independently verified, except in the case of select examples of impactful reports.

[4] The sampling methodology is presented in annex II. OIOS reports were included in (a) screening of reports and (b) quality assessment of reports. Six OIOS evaluation reports were included in the sample for quality assessment. OIOS was also included in financial analysis drawing on data from proposed programme budgets and Form 12. OIOS was not included in the document review, the focal points survey or the screened reports survey.

[5] The difference between the overall number of screened reports (273) and the number included in the survey of screened reports (249) was due to the exclusion of 18 OIOS reports and 6 reports of the Department of Political Affairs (produced by the Peacebuilding Support Office). The remaining reports of the Department of Political Affairs were surveyed through the Department focal point.

III. Evaluation structure, process and practice

A. There has been some strengthening of the evaluation functions within entities, as 11 entities made a structural shift towards greater independence

4. By the end of the biennium, most entities housed their evaluation function in a dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division, as shown in table 1. Of the seven entities which had reported minimal or no evaluation activity in the previous biennium, one (Department of Safety and Security) now had a dedicated evaluation unit; three (Office of Legal Affairs, Office for Outer Space Affairs and United Nations Office at Geneva) reported evaluation activity despite the lack of an evaluation unit; and three others (Office for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations Office at Nairobi and United Nations Office at Vienna) continued to report a lack of evaluation activity.

Table 1
Structures of evaluation functions by the end of 2015

Stand-alone evaluation unit	*Dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division*	*Unit not dedicated to evaluation (includes other activities within a multifunctional division)*	*No evaluation unit but some evaluation activity*	*No evaluation unit and no evaluation activity*
DPI	DGACM	ECE	DESA	ODA
UNCTAD	DPKO-DFS	ECLAC	DM	UNON
UNEP	DSS	ESCWA	DPA	UNOV
UNHCR	ECA		OOSA	
UNODC	ESCAP		OLA	
UN-Habitat	ITC		OSAA	
UN-Women	OCHA		OHRLLS	
	OHCHR		UNOG	
	UNRWA			

Abbreviations: DESA, Department of Economic and Social Affairs; DGACM, Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; DM, Department of Management; DPA, Department of Political Affairs; DPI, Department of Public Information; DPKO-DFS, Department of Peacekeeping Operations-Department of Field Support; DSS, Department of Safety and Security; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECE, Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; ITC, International Trade Centre; OCHA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; ODA, Office for Disarmament Affairs; OHCHR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; OHRLLS, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; OLA, Office of Legal Affairs; OOSA, Office for Outer Space Affairs; OSAA, Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; UNCTAD, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UN-Habitat, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); UNHCR, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; UNODC, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; UNOG, United Nations Office at Geneva; UNON, United Nations Office at Nairobi; UNOV, United Nations Office at Vienna; UN-Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Source: Focal points survey.

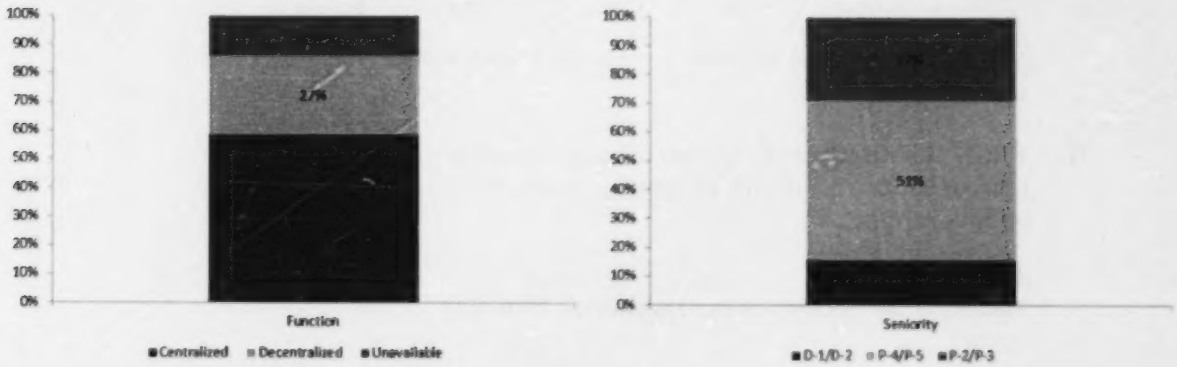
5. As compared with the previous biennium, reporting lines became more independent, as 15 entities had their senior-most evaluation staff member reporting to the head of the entity, of whom 2 reported to their governing body as well. For nine entities, the reporting line was to a staff member who was not the head of entity. Four entities had no evaluation staff at the end of 2015.[6]

6. In general, evaluation culture was reported as positive across the Secretariat.[7] In the survey of focal points, two thirds reported that the evaluation culture during 2014-15 had been excellent or good.[8] Support of senior management emerged as a strong determinant of culture. Several entities cited strengthened policies, procedures and capacity development among programme staff as examples of positive culture. Others noted lack of resources and capacity as the primary reason for their inability to demonstrate extensive activities despite the existing supportive culture.

7. Twenty-six entities reported that a total of 131 staff members were working on evaluation. Figure I presents a breakdown across staffing level and location.

Figure I

Function and seniority of Secretariat evaluation staff, for 131 evaluation staff members across 30 entities



Source: Focal points survey.

8. As shown in figure II, the average prior experience in evaluation of staff exercising that function at most levels across the Secretariat exceeds United Nations Evaluation Group standards, with staff at the P-5 level being the only exception.[9]

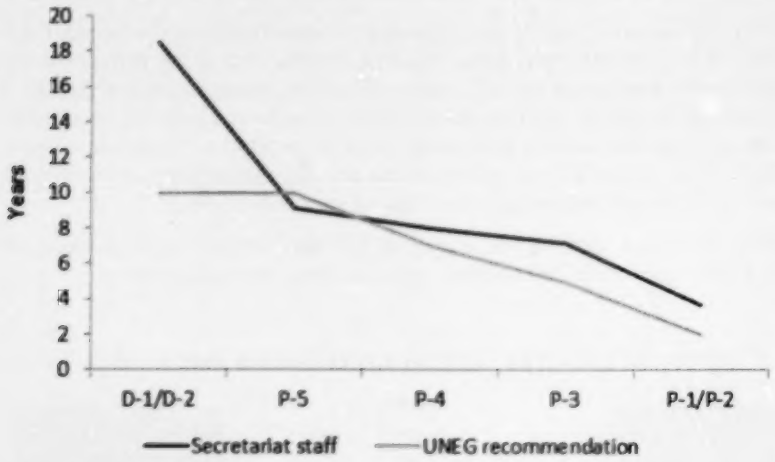
[6] Entities without evaluation staff included the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna.

[7] As compared with 2012-2013, evaluation culture in 2014-2015 deteriorated for 6 entities, remained the same for 11 and improved for 13.

[8] Six entities reported the evaluation culture as excellent; 14, as good; 6, as fair; 2, as poor; and 2, as very poor. It is notable that five entities that did not produce evaluation reports rated their evaluation culture as good; and five others, while rating that culture as fair, said the function was nevertheless "sufficient" for their needs.

[9] The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) documents entitled "UNEG Job Description for Evaluators in the UN System" provide guidance on the minimum required number of years of professional experience in evaluation for evaluators at the P-5 level (10), the P-4 level (7), the P-3 level (5) and P-1/P-2 (2).

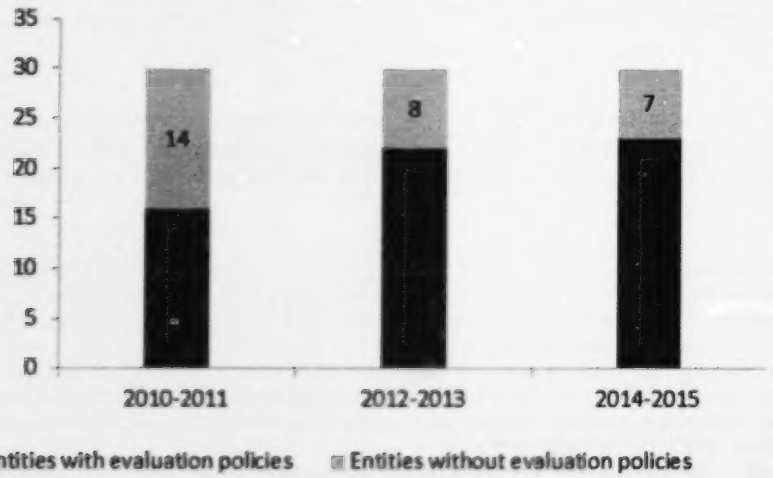
Figure II
Prior experience in evaluation of United Nations staff, compared with United Nations Evaluation Group standards, in years, for 131 staff members across 30 entities



Source: Focal points survey.

B. While the number of entities with evaluation policies and plans increased, the adoption of appropriate procedures continued to be incomplete

Figure III
Number of entities with evaluation policies, 2010-2015



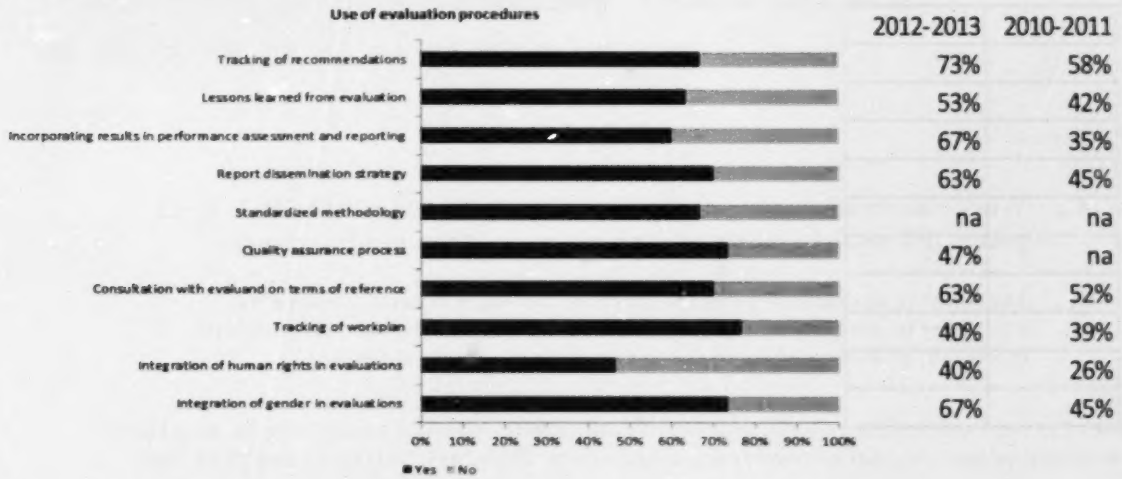
Sources: OIOS biennial reports for 2010-2011 (A/68/70) and 2012-2013 (A/70/72) and OIOS document review of evaluation policies.

9. As shown in figure III, the number of entities with evaluation policies had increased to 23 by the end of 2015.[10] Three other entities developed evaluation policies in 2016. However, the average quality rating of policies remained steady, at 1.5, compared with the previous biennium.[11] Mainstreaming gender and human rights in evaluation policies was a persistent challenge, reflected in low average scores.

10. While 24 entities reported the use of evaluation workplans covering 2014-2015 in the focal points survey, 19 submitted them to OIOS.[12] The document review of workplans suggested weaknesses in the areas of planning, earmarking of resources and specification of staff responsible for evaluations.

11. Twenty-three entities reported that they used at least one of several key procedures to support their evaluation work. However, as shown in figure IV, the document review found that fewer entities had formally instituted those procedures.

Figure IV
Evaluation procedures across 30 entities, 2010-2011 and 2012-2013
(Proportion of entities)

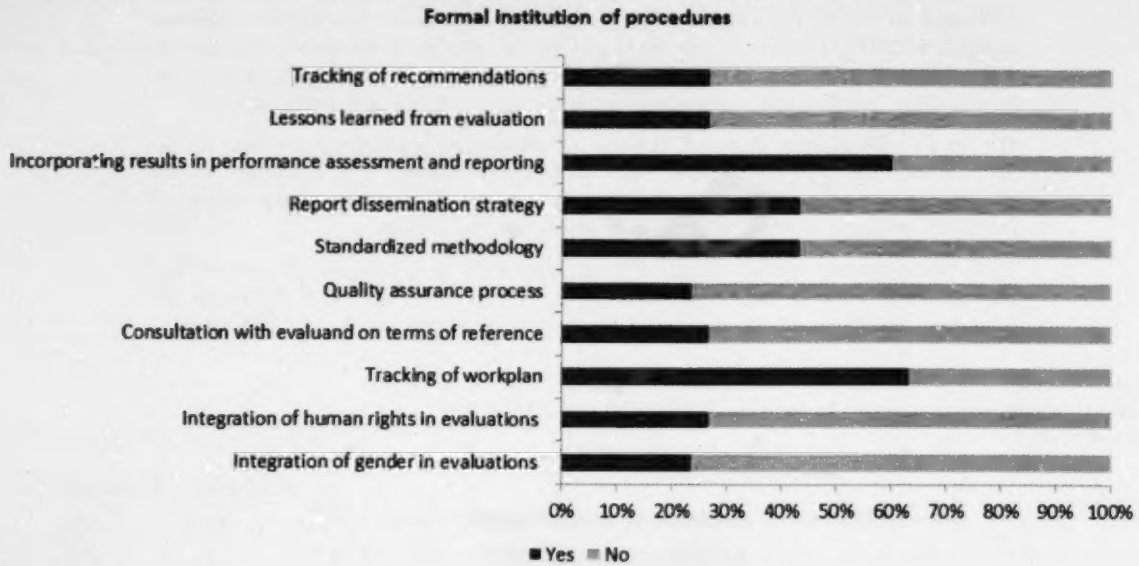


Source: Focal points survey.

[10] The Department of Safety and Security established its evaluation policy in the biennium 2014-2015; the Department of Public Information, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, in 2016. The Office of Legal Affairs, and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna continue to operate without an evaluation policy.

[11] Assessment of evaluation policies was based on 19 criteria of quality as described in the United Nations Evaluation Group "Norms and Standards for Evaluation" (2005). Fulfilment of individual criteria were scored from 0 to 2 based on the strength of the evidence; the average quality rating represents the mean under the 19 criteria. Policies created or updated in 2016 were not included.

[12] Evaluation plans for 2014-2015 were not submitted by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management; the Department of Management; the Department of Safety and Security; the Office for Disarmament Affairs; the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; the Office of Legal Affairs; the Office for Outer Space Affairs; the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa; the United Nations Office at Geneva; the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna.


Formal institution of procedures
Tracking of recommendations
Lessons learned from evaluation
Incorporating results in performance assessment and reporting
Report dissemination strategy
Standardized methodology
Quality assurance process
Consultation with evaluand on terms of reference
Tracking of workplan
Integration of human rights in evaluations
Integration of gender in evaluations
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Yes
No

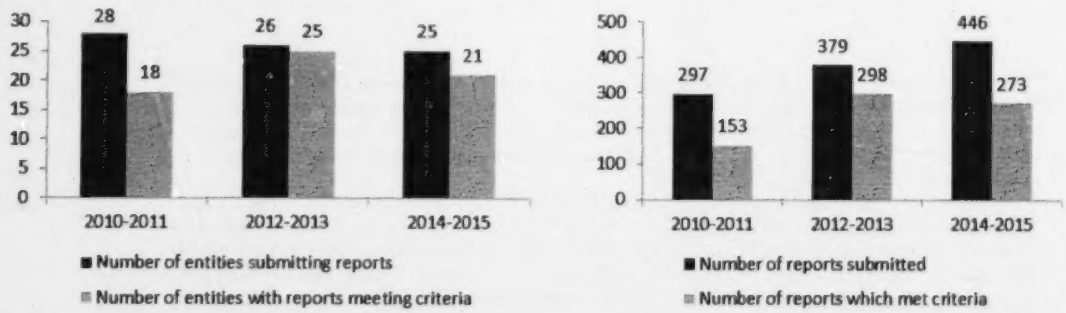
Source: Documents review.

C. While the number of evaluation reports declined in 2014-2015, focal points did report greater usage and impact than in prior years

The number of evaluation reports meeting screening criteria declined by 8 per cent in 2014-2015, from 298 to 273. However, other evaluation activities increased, as evidenced by the larger number of reports submitted[13]

Figure V

Number of entities submitting reports, number of entities with reports meeting criteria, number of reports submitted and number of reports meeting criteria, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015



Sources: OIOS data, and documents A/70/72 and A/68/72.

[13] Submissions from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Office at Geneva did not meet criteria for evaluation reports. See footnote 3 for screening criteria.

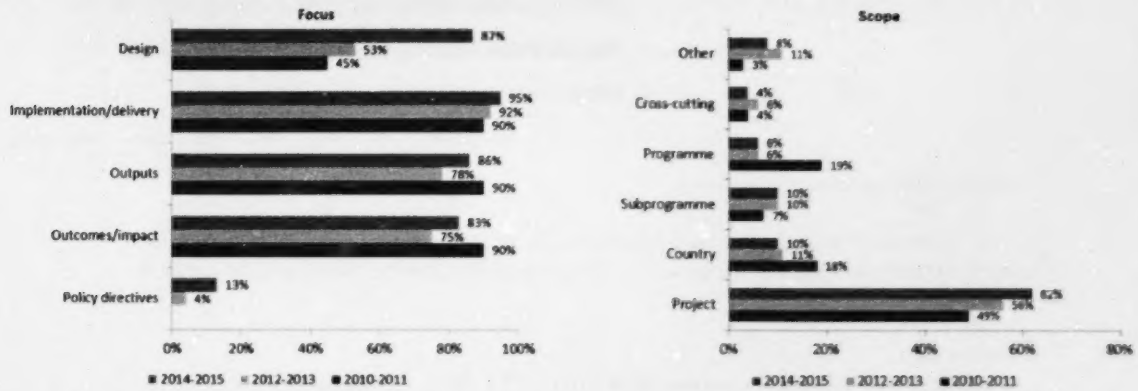
12. The number and proportion of submissions that met the screening criteria for evaluation reports declined from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015, as shown in figure V.

13. The quality assessment found that the reports covered all focus areas besides policy directives, as shown in figure VI. Narrow project-focused evaluations constituted 62 per cent of the total and many appeared to respond to project reporting requirements. With 10 per cent of the reports having a country-level scope and 4 per cent being of a cross-cutting nature, the potential to use these evaluations to inform entity-wide decisions appears limited.

Figure VI

Focus and scope of sampled evaluation reports, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015

(Proportion of sampled reports)

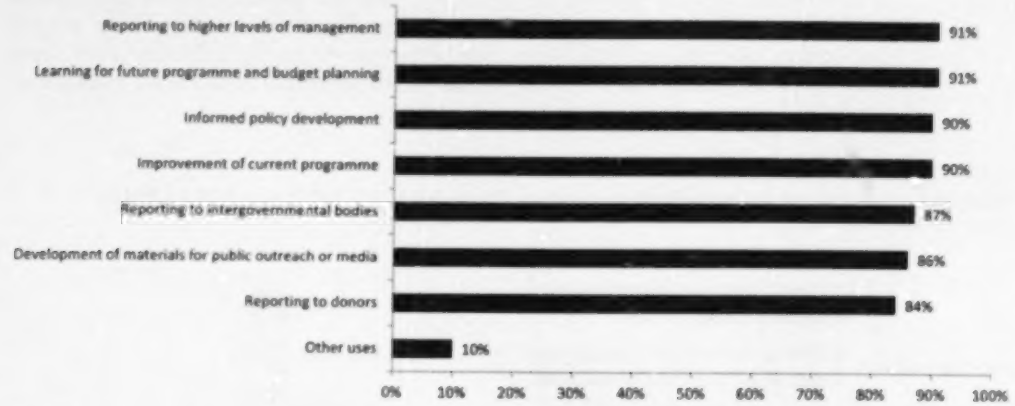


Source: Quality assessment of reports.

Focal points reported considerable usage of their reports in terms of immediate utility, longer-term outcomes and tracking of recommendations

14. At least one or more uses were cited by focal points for each of the 249 reports included in the survey of screened reports, as shown in figure VII.

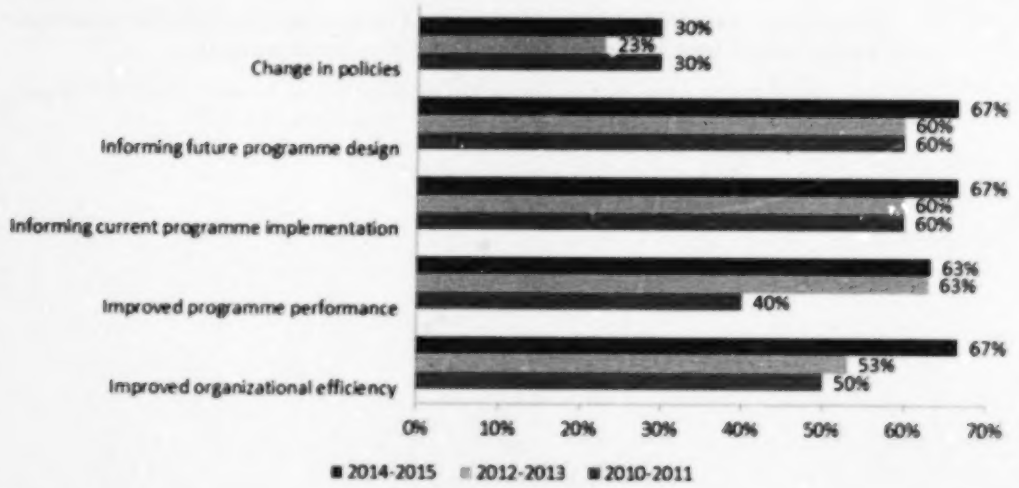
Figure VII
Uses of evaluation reports, 2014-2015
(Proportion of reports)



Source: OIOS screened reports survey.

15. Compared with the previous biennium, focal points reported an increase across most outcomes, with the exception of "improved programme performance", which remained steady (figure VIII).

Figure VIII
Outcomes of evaluation reports, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015
(Proportion of entities)



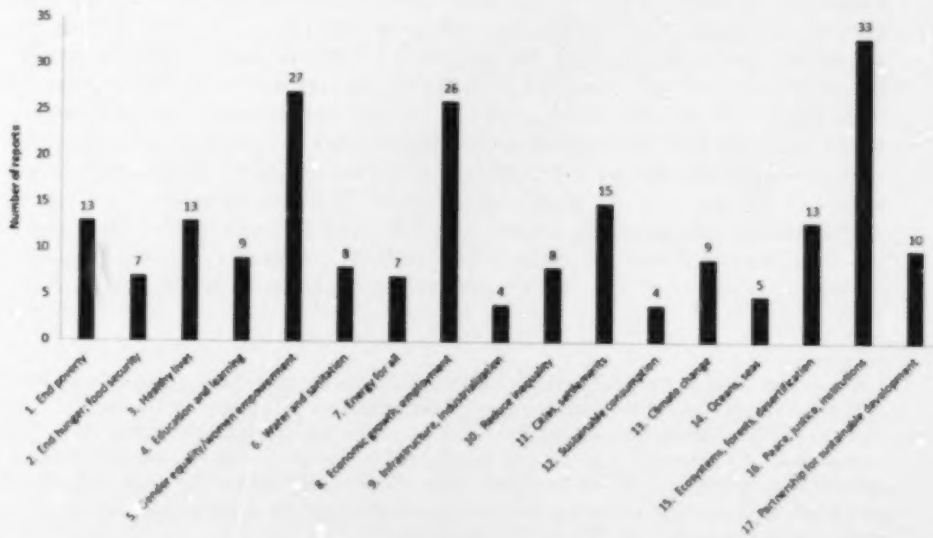
Source: OIOS focal points survey.

16. Twenty-five entities (83 per cent) cumulatively issued 3,084 recommendations in 2014-2015. During the same period 2,023 recommendations were due to be implemented, with 34 per cent outstanding at the time of reporting. The quality assessment of reports found about half (53 per cent) of the recommendations in sampled reports to be of good or excellent quality and 52 per cent were rated as actionable. Thus, while a considerable number of recommendations are stemming from evaluation reports, many are not actionable, possibly contributing to a high proportion of outstanding recommendations.

While most evaluation reports touched upon one or more Sustainable Development Goals, one quarter of all evaluation policies incorporated the measurement of target indicators for the Goals

17. The quality assessment of evaluation reports found that 95 per cent referenced one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals, predominantly in the areas of peace and justice, gender equality and economic growth, as shown in figure IX.[14] As the Sustainable Development Goals had been adopted only on 25 September 2015, they were referenced in the evaluation policies, plans or procedures by only 7 out of 30 entities. Nine entities indicated that the 2014-2015 evaluations may provide a baseline for future evaluations relating to the Goals.

Figure IX
References to the Sustainable Development Goals in 100 sampled evaluation reports, 2014-2015



Source: Quality assessment.

[14] The total of all reports referencing the Sustainable Development Goals is greater than 100 because many reports referenced more than one Goal.

D. A difference of 90 per cent or more was observed between resources allocated to discretionary self-evaluation and the costs of producing evaluation reports for 13 entities, suggesting the limited accuracy of reported budgets and the inclusion of activities that do not result in the production of evaluation reports under the discretionary self-evaluation allocation

18. Monitoring and evaluation funds in 2014-2015 were estimated at $56.6 million and represented 0.23 per cent of the total net budget of $24.3 billion.[15] At the entity level, the ratio of monitoring and evaluation budgets to total programme budget estimates ranged from 0.02 to 5.72 per cent. The Joint Inspection Unit has indicated a range of from 0.5 to 3 per cent of organizational expenditure for evaluation, while noting variation based on differences in the purpose of evaluation function, types of evaluations undertaken and economies of scale, which explain relatively lower proportions of evaluation budgets in larger organizations.[16] Combined monitoring and evaluation budgets for 12 individual entities and for the Secretariat as a whole fell below this range.

19. According to estimates reported by entities through their budget submission, less than half (46.7 per cent) of the total resources for monitoring and evaluation were assigned to evaluation, representing $26.4 million out of $56.6 million.[17]

20. Through adoption of an output-based approach to estimating evaluation costs, entities were asked to report on the staff and non-staff resources used in the production of those evaluation reports that were submitted for this review. Estimated resources for the 249 evaluation reports constituted $19.47 million. This amount comprised $9.3 million for staff costs (48 per cent), $9.2 million for consultants and other non-staff (47 per cent) and $1 million for other expenses, including travel (5 per cent).[18] The reported expenditure on evaluation reports represented 73.7 per cent of the amount allocated to discretionary self-evaluation, which suggested that $6.9 million of evaluation funds (26.3 per cent) were spent on evaluation activities that were not captured in evaluation reports. At the entity level, a gap of 90 per cent or more was observed between expenditure on report production and allocations for discretionary self-evaluation across 13 entities and a gap lying between 25 and 90 per cent for 4 entities. Five entities reported expenses for reports in excess of allocated discretionary self-evaluation funds, ranging from

[15] Sources: monitoring and evaluation funds: OIOS calculations for 2014-2015 estimates, extracted from individual sections of the proposed programme budgets for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/68/6) and supplemented with updated Form 12 figures for the Department of Public Information, the Department of Safety and Security and the Economic Commission for Europe, pursuant to the guidance of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts; and total net budget, as set out in sect. A of the annex to the introduction to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/6 (Introduction)).

[16] JIU/REP/2014/6, para 77. The recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit is for evaluation expenditure only, as distinct from monitoring.

[17] Missing values for proportion allocated to discretionary self-evaluation was replaced using a mean of 46 per cent in the case of nine entities for which data were not available.

[18] Cost per report in United States dollars: mean = $78,202, median = $81,944, range = $10,650-$409,167, from screened report survey.

30 to 2,200 per cent, suggesting sources of extrabudgetary funding for evaluation.[19] In some cases, this gap resulted from little or no coordination between evaluation and budget focal points.

21. In September 2016, the Department of Management in consultation with OIOS issued revised guidelines to budget and evaluation focal points on the reporting of evaluation allocations. These guidelines specified that all activities that did not result in the production of evaluation reports should be labelled as monitoring.[20] The impact of these guidelines will become apparent in the reporting of evaluation resources for the budget for the biennium 2018-2019.

Evaluation practice is significantly limited in some entities, despite the allocation of evaluation funds

22. Six entities did not submit reports for this assessment (the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations Office at Vienna). Submissions from four entities (the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Office at Geneva) did not meet the criteria for evaluation reports. Across these 10 entities, $3.7 million was cumulatively budgeted for discretionary self-evaluation, suggesting that this amount was used for evaluation activities that did not result in any evaluation reports during the biennium.[21] Some entities reported that such budgeted funds were strictly for monitoring and performance improvement activities and not for evaluations.

23. Entities with total programme budgets of less than US$ 100 million produced fewer evaluation reports than those with greater budgets: 7 of 10 entities without screened reports fell within this range. As evidenced by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), however, this is not always the case. ESCWA allocated 0.40 per cent of its overall budget to monitoring and evaluation and produced nine evaluation reports during the biennium. Leadership provided by the office of the Executive Secretary and proactive engagement by the Evaluation Chief were identified as contributing factors to the Commission's strong function.

24. Entities with larger programme budgets (above US$ 100 million) generally produced evaluation reports, except for three.[22] Fragmented organizational structures, and challenges of evaluating management and support-oriented programmes contributed to a limited number of evaluation outputs within those entities.

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[19] These results are based on analysis comparing data on discretionary self-evaluation with self-reported data from the screened reports survey. Data on discretionary self-evaluation were not available for nine entities.

[20] See also para. 54.

[21] The source is discretionary self-evaluation data. In the case of 1 of the 10 entities noted in para. 22, discretionary self-evaluation data was missing, and was replaced using the mean discretionary self-evaluation proportion of total monitoring and evaluation resources.

[22] Twenty-two entities had a budget of over $100 million; 8 had a budget of less than $100 million. The International Trade Centre was not included in this analysis.

IV. Good practice for more effective evaluations

25. While adequate policies, plans and procedures, resources and structural independence of evaluation functions are necessary elements of a robust evaluation function, it is increasingly evident that the establishment of these elements is not sufficient for the production of impactful evaluations which enable entities to effectively engage in learning while supporting accountability. Thus, this report entailed the assessment of some good practices, as identified by focal points and evaluands, to determine what elements facilitate more effective evaluation.

Timing is critical for determining the usability of reports

26. The timing of report issuance was repeatedly cited as having fundamental implications for the utility of evaluations. Well-timed evaluation reports were keenly anticipated by stakeholders, enjoyed support from senior management and were found to have a significant impact on strategic direction and planning. Evaluation functions could leverage their work planning in order to align the timing of the issuance of the report with the development of a programmatic initiative, the reassessment of strategic direction or the decision to launch a new programme or project. Several entities also described the need to disseminate results in a well-timed manner either through frequent issuance of results briefs throughout the evaluation, or annual compilations of results for governing bodies. For example, the purpose of the evaluation of the subprogramme of the ESCWA Centre for Women Division, which covered the Centre's strategic frameworks and work programmes for the period 2012-2015, was to identify strengths and lessons learned from the work of the Division in promoting gender equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. The fact that the evaluation was completed prior to the development of the 2016-17 workplan enabled management to apply its recommendations, address fragmentation of programmes and provide greater strategic focus to its work by reinstating previously successful programmes while withdrawing from those activities that were being better served elsewhere within ESCWA.

Conducting participatory evaluations

27. Engaging the evaluand early on during the evaluation cycle was found to be a critical element in ensuring its success and utility. A participatory approach and regular communication assisted in the internalization of the evaluation by the evaluand, leading to greater receptivity towards negative findings and cultivation of a "culture of accountability", and overall utility. For example, through substantive consultations with multiple groups of stakeholders, the formative evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) medium-term strategy 2014-2017 assessed the appropriateness of the strategy. The key change that emanated was the adoption of a long-term horizon for the strategy by Member States in recognition of the extended timespan required by the various programmes, particularly those of a normative nature, to demonstrate their outcomes. The outlook for the strategy incorporated the 2030 development agenda and targets, as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals, and all other planning processes were consequently aligned to this long-term vision.

Developing usable recommendations

28. For evaluations to be successful, recommendations should be specific and realistic, and action plans should be time-bound, as attested through interviews with focal points and evaluands. As this would represent a challenge for external consultants, particularly in decentralized evaluations, entities suggested the use of steering committees and expert groups to develop more nuanced and meaningful recommendations. For example, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) corporate evaluation of women's economic empowerment helped enrich the entity's programmatic work in several ways. By highlighting the need for UN-Women staff to engage strategically with macroeconomic issues at the country level, the evaluation provided the women's economic empowerment programme with the impetus to identify and address specific skills and knowledge gaps among staff members. This led to a course on gender and macroeconomics, which helped strengthen the capacity of its staff to engage with government authorities and policymakers on macroeconomic issues. Furthermore, UN-Women deepened its strategic partnerships, for example, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on gender-responsive budgeting, leading it to track more systematically the impact of national budgetary decisions on women. Finally, the evaluation enabled the Women's Economic Empowerment Section to consolidate multiple small-scale projects and leverage them into long-term flagship programming initiatives in order to deliver greater impact.

29. These good practices may be considered by all evaluation functions to enhance the utility and impact of evaluation in their respective contexts.

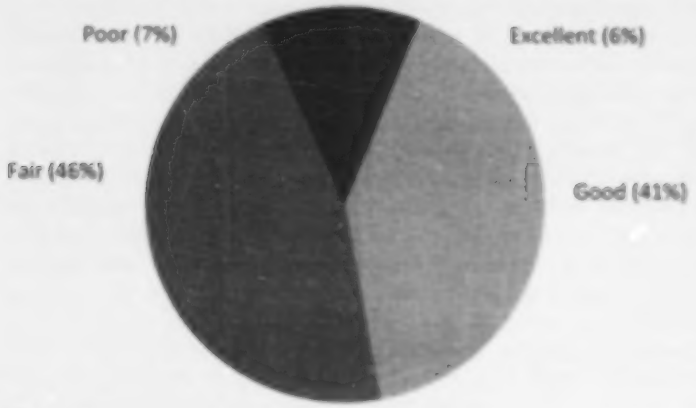
V. Quality of reports and selected results from evaluations produced during 2014-2015

Quality and coverage of evaluation reports

30. The quality assessment rated 100 randomly selected reports across a set of multiple standards, and compiled results from those rated "excellent" or "good" in the results section into a compendium of evaluation findings.[25] This assessment provided an important overview of the results of the evaluations conducted in 2014-2015 while also illustrating the relative strengths and weaknesses of those reports. Figure X shows the distribution of overall quality, which was comparable with that of previous years.

[25] The overall quality rating was based on a compilation of 30 criteria assessing each report's executive summary, introduction, methodology, background, results, conclusions, recommendations and format.

Figure X
Overall quality of 100 evaluation reports, by rating, 2014-2015



(Proportion)

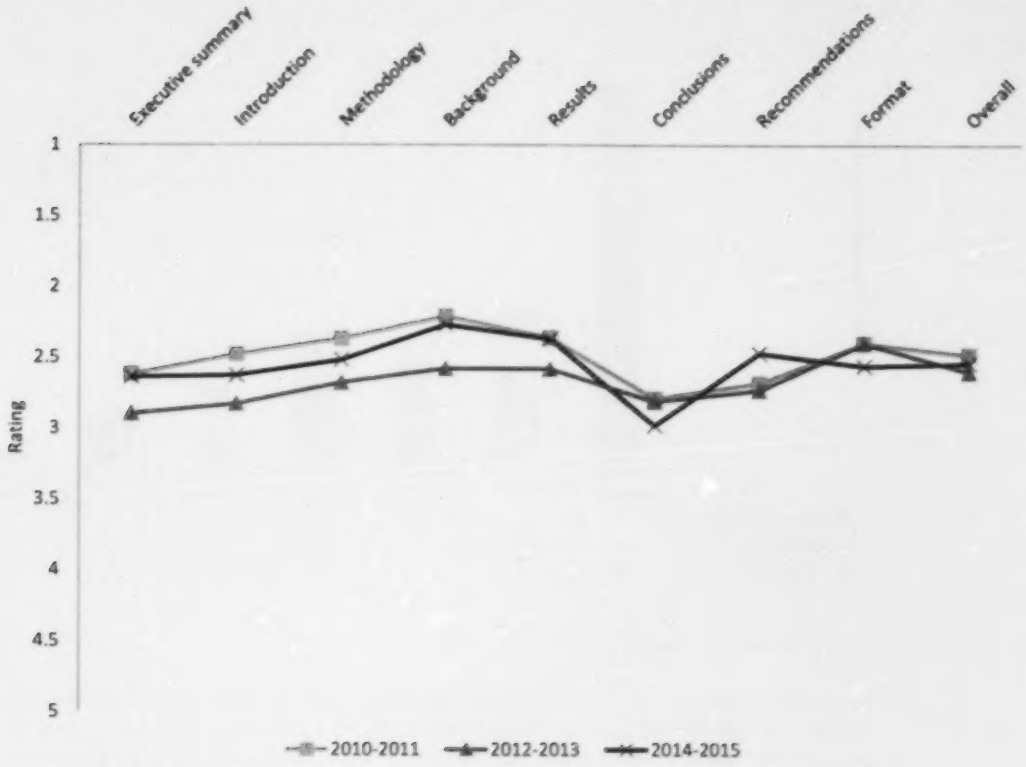
Source: Quality assessment.

31. Six reports, from the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UN-Women, received an overall rating of excellent. The overall quality of the evaluation reports was fair (with an average value of 2.54), which was comparable with the quality of the reports of the previous biennium (with an average value of 2.65).[24] The quality of most sections improved, although average scores decreased for the format and the conclusions section (figure XI).[25] No reports were rated very poor.

[24] Figure XI rating interpretation: 1.50 - 2.49 = good; 2.50 - 3.49 = fair.

[25] Almost two thirds of the reports (61 per cent) had results (evaluation findings) of good quality (51 per cent) or excellent quality (10 per cent), representing an improvement compared with the previous biennium (2012-2013). The share of good or excellent results increased from 50 (in 2012-2013) to 61 per cent.

Figure XI
Quality of evaluation reports by section, 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015

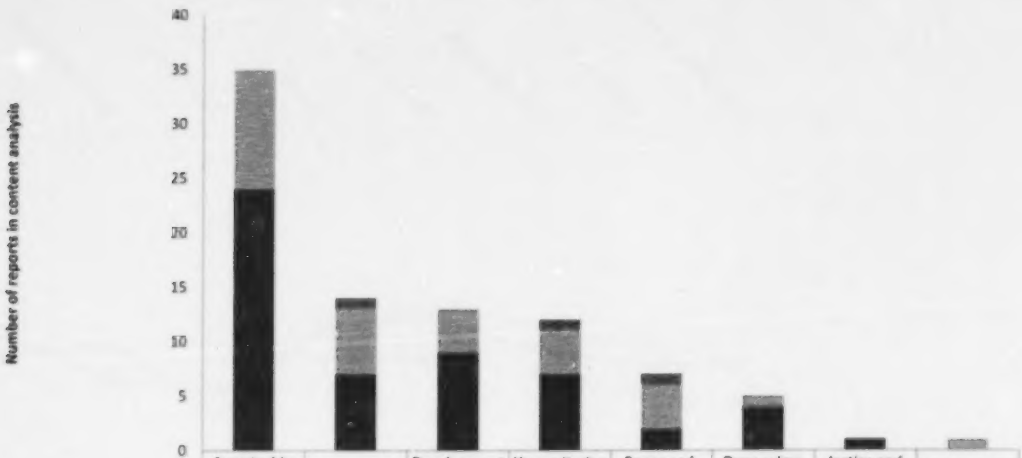


Source: Quality assessment.
Note: Average rating across all reports: rating: 1 = excellent, 2 = good, 3 = fair, 4 = poor, 5 = very poor.

32. Figure XII displays the distribution of reports rated good or excellent for the quality of their results section across the Secretary General's eight priority areas. [26]

[26] Sixty-one reports received good or excellent scores in their results section. The total of all reports shown in figure XII is greater than 61 because several reports can be attributed to more than one priority area.

Figure XII
Distribution of evaluation reports by priority area, 2014-2015



	Sustainable development	Human rights	Development for Africa	Humanitarian assistance	Peace and security	Drug, crime and terrorism	Justice and law	Disarmament
Largely negative results	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Mixed results	11	6	4	4	4	1	0	1
Largely positive results	24	7	9	7	2	4	1	0

Source: Quality assessment.

33. Gender dimensions were better mainstreamed than human rights. Twenty-eight evaluations examined work of the United Nations in the area of human rights or incorporated human rights principles, while 33 reports adopted a gender dimension for the subjects being evaluated.

34. Under rule 107.2b of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation: "Programme managers shall, in collaboration with their staff, undertake self-evaluation of all subprogrammes under their responsibility." Under rule 107.2 (b) (i): "The timing, scope and other characteristics of a self-evaluation study shall be determined by the nature and characteristics of the activities programmed and other relevant factors." Allowing for the entity-specific identification of the appropriate periodicity of evaluation, subprogramme coverage provided by evaluation reports produced in 2014-2015 is presented in table 2.[27]

[27] Data were not available for UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat.

Table 2
Coverage of subprogrammes by evaluation reports produced in 2014-2015

Less than 50 per cent	*50-74 per cent*	*75-99 per cent*	*100 per cent*
DM	DESA	DPKO	ESCAP
DPA	DPI	OHCHR	ESCWA
ECE	ECLAC		ITC
ECA	UNODC		UNCTAD
			UNEP
			UN-Habitat
			UNRWA
			UN-Women

Source: Focal points survey and screened reports survey.
Note: For abbreviations, see footnote to table 1 above.

Selected results by priority areas

Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development

35. In this area, 35 out of 61 reports received good or excellent ratings for their results. Of these, 24 presented largely positive results and 11, mixed results. Selected highlights from the reports include the following observations:

- The 2014 Climate Summit was more clearly branded as a United Nations event than previous such conferences. The United Nations and the Secretary-General had a high level of visibility. The Summit was mentioned in 87 per cent of total analysed clippings with media coverage being positive overall. The use of celebrity spokespersons over social media helped enable new audiences to be reached and drawn towards United Nations accounts.
- UNCTAD peer reviews of competition laws and policies were hailed for delivering practical recommendations with clear national road maps so as to minimize constraints on economic productivity. Competition authorities were equipped with a high-quality analysis of their competition protection frameworks and provided follow-up technical assistance. The peer review process contributed to improved competition climates in 10 out of 12 reviewed countries in the form of improved legislation; however, enforcement still needed to be strengthened.
- The concept of pro-poor public-private partnerships (the 5P approach) as a possible approach to increasing access to rural energy was met with considerable interest by Member States and the private sector. However, because the necessary technical assistance was lacking, demonstration projects evolved differently across countries, which led to the dilution of the main principles. As a result, several setbacks and challenges were encountered in

relation to their financial viability and the selection of appropriate business models and appropriate communities.

- Progress has been made in measuring women's unpaid work in the Latin America and Caribbean region, to which this project contributed significantly by means of methodological and conceptual support for improving the quality of measurement instruments in two ways, namely, through the classification of time-use activities which allows for international comparisons; and the adoption of the "total work time" indicator. Users found the quality of activities under this project to be very high. Advocacy, partnerships and policy dialogue helped ensure that the topic remained high in the agenda and that the production and analysis of statistics were encouraged.

- The International Trade Centre has, despite significant constraints, continued to provide high-quality services which are relevant and responsive, effective and relatively efficient. The activities have achieved their intended immediate capacity-building outcomes, with clear prospects in most cases of contributing to their higher-level goals. On the other hand, the overall resource situation of the Centre severely limited its ability to service requests in a systematic manner: there was no catalogue of products or a planned approach to needs assessment in place.

Promotion of human rights

36. In the area of promotion of human rights, 14 reports received high ratings for their results section. Of these, seven presented largely positive results; six, mixed results; and one, largely negative results. Key results included the following:

- Although efforts of UNHCR to build resilience and self-reliance for refugees were slowly expanded, an OIOS report found that the efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner were less successful in achieving long-term solutions for persons of concern in protracted refugee situations, being largely oriented towards an emergency response model and hampered by an annual planning and budgeting cycle. Nevertheless, the level 3 emergency response protected South Sudanese refugees by enabling unhindered, non-discriminatory access to Ugandan territory, registration and essential protection services. It saved lives and provided refugees with some degree of self-reliance. The expansion and improvement of health and nutrition services had positive outcomes for both the host population and the refugee community, and outbreaks of communicable diseases were largely avoided.

- The work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed discrimination in the Republic of Moldova across various fronts. New legislation on alternative military service in the Transnistrian region was adopted and LGBT pride marches were safely carried out. The segregation of Roma and non-Roma students in a number of schools was discontinued. The competence of judicial and quasi-judicial bodies with respect to addressing discrimination in accordance with international law was strengthened, as was the documentation and pursuit of over 50 emblematic discrimination cases. A non-governmental organization established to represent parents of children with disabilities was invited to advise the Ministry of Education on inclusion.

Development of Africa

37. Thirteen reports received high ratings for the quality of their results section. Of these, nine presented largely positive results and four, mixed results. Key results included the following:

- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) operated in all key areas of intervention, effecting the transition to recovery and development by applying the guiding principles on obtaining results when working in an early recovery context focused on pertinent country-specific physical development issues that influence the peace process. However, the sometimes modest scale of projects and reliance on donor funding limited visibility, coherence and feasibility with respect to working strategically on key urbanization themes. Nevertheless, UN-Habitat integrated the same recurring themes in various projects to obtain impact through scale and repetition.
- The experiment of the market-based payment for ecosystem services scheme revealed that although reduced deforestation and increased reforestation in forest areas outside of formally protected areas in western Uganda were achieved by the treatment group as compared with the control group, the results were not of sufficient statistical significance to provide a convincing rationale for replicating the programme across Uganda. The payment for ecosystem services scheme provided income and other social benefits which incentivized people to refrain from cutting down or degrading forests and led to the creation of a strong network of non-government and civil society organizations.
- The Ministry of Gender of Mozambique was supported in expanding social mobilization for zero tolerance towards violence against women. Successful interventions encompassed the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign with secondary school students and training sessions for officials in charge of implementing the integrated mechanism of assistance to women and girls who were victims of violence. Ministry staff were trained on gender-responsive budgeting, which resulted in the development and effective use of the simplified gender matrix. Government capacities were built to promote gender-sensitive employment policies and workforce skills. Women were trained to act as observers in the October 2014 elections and political party members were trained to increase their leadership capacity. However, the achievement of the overarching gender equality and women's empowerment outcomes was limited.

Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts

38. Twelve reports in this priority area received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results sections. Of these, seven presented largely positive results; four, mixed results; and one, negative results. Key results included:

- Humanitarian assistance efforts were evaluated in South Sudan, Somalia and the Central African Republic. The evaluations in South Sudan and the Central African Republic provided evidence of valuable gains achieved through contributions of the Common Humanitarian Funds in those countries.

However, the evaluation in Somalia noted a decrease in global funding, attributed to competing priorities for humanitarian assistance as well as a shift towards rehabilitation funding as security in Somalia continues to improve.

- Collaboration with Delivering as One, which is based on the multidimensional nature of poverty and inequality, can be beneficial for UNHCR in its efforts to deliver durable solutions for its persons of concern, as demonstrated by a small but growing body of evidence that suggests that where UNHCR has been part of the common country assessment, its persons of concern were afforded the same level of prioritization as others in the One Programme. However, generally speaking, UNHCR had limited success in galvanizing collective programme and policy support through the Delivering as One initiative, owing to the lack of consolidated internal guidance and the inconsistent manner in which human rights are considered. The programme approach and business systems of UNHCR are ill adapted to joint programming activities.

- The family health team approach was highly relevant to Palestine refugees: it was appropriate in terms of providing them with primary health care. That approach increased the overall health status of the population and the level of services while decreasing costs over time. Screening, diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases as well as outreach activities improved.

Maintenance of international peace and security

39. Seven reports in this area received good or excellent ratings for the quality of their results section. Of these, two presented largely positive results; four, mixed results; and one, negative results. Highlights included:

- Steps taken through the enforcement and remedial assistance efforts for sexual exploitation and abuse by the United Nations and related personnel in peacekeeping operations, contributed to a reduction in reported sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. However, despite a downward trend, sexual exploitation and abuse allegations persisted, i.e., there were 480 allegations between 2008 and 2013, with those involving minors accounting for over one third of all allegations. Unclear distribution of responsibilities within the enforcement architecture, compounded by long delays in completing investigations, undermined its effectiveness. Evidence from peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Liberia suggested that transactional sex was quite common but underreported. Additionally, wide variations in sanctions weakened the commitment to zero tolerance. Remedial assistance to victims was very weak.

Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism

40. In the area of drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism, five reports received good or excellent ratings for the overall quality of their results section. Of these, four presented largely positive results and one, mixed results. The reports covered the provision of basic social assistance to at-risk populations as a part of HIV/AIDS prevention and management, institution-building with regard to prison reform and anti-money laundering, and research on corruption and drugs. In general, results were based on project-level evaluations. For example, the reports evidenced the effectiveness of social assistance interventions for at-risk

populations in HIV/AIDS prevention and management in East Africa, and the impact of extensive criminal justice reform in Kyrgyzstan. Other reports documented more limited evidence of success such as the evaluation of anti-corruption initiatives in the Mekong region which noted that although national laws had improved in terms of their compliance with international standards and although officials had become more knowledgeable and aware, there were fewer actual investigations, seizures and prosecution.

Promotion of justice and international law

41. The one report that fell under this priority area received a good or excellent rating for the quality of its results sections and presented largely positive results. The evaluation of the Peacebuilding Fund response to the need to restore justice and reconciliation in Sierra Leone found that with Fund support, the reparation programme for war victims had been implemented as planned: 13,526 war victims received cash assistance and 1,138 amputee victims, who had received assistance in 2009, were given an additional payout. The completion of the reparation process and the implementation of the recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped ensure the provision of material assistance to the victims in securing their livelihoods while also constituting a symbolic act of acknowledgement of their suffering and demonstrating a commitment to restoring justice.

Disarmament

42. As in the previous paragraph, covering promotion of justice and international law, there was only one well-ranked report on disarmament, related to the priority areas of the Peacebuilding Fund. The priority areas were found to be relevant to peacebuilding needs and sufficiently broad. However, concerns were expressed about ensuring that Fund programming in social security reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants adds distinct value based on its own criteria and does not simply top up an already existing donor-funded pool of resources.

VI. Evaluation workplan of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

43. In 2016-2017, OIOS will have completed evaluations for the following entities:

- UNHCR:

  (a) UNHCR engagement with and for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) in mixed refugee and IDP settings;

  (b) UNHCR role in the registration of refugees and asylum seekers

- Department of Political Affairs
- UNRWA
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

- ECE
- ESCWA
- Executive Office of the Secretary-General

44. The following thematic evaluations will have been completed in 2016-2017:

- Work of the regional commissions

45. In peacekeeping evaluation, the following evaluations will have been completed during 1 July 2016-30 June 2017:

- Integration between peacekeeping operations and United Nations country teams
- Results of national police capacity-building
- Strategic deployment stocks
- Force generation
- Robust peacekeeping
- "Rehatting" in peacekeeping missions

46. For the biennium 2018-2019, OIOS further refined its evaluation risk assessment exercise, including more systemic consideration of the framework of the Secretariat enterprise risk management risk register. The following entities and themes have been identified for evaluation in 2018-2019:

- The Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence Against Children
- Department of Public Information
- Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
- Office for Disarmament Affairs
- Department of Management
- UNHCR
- Office of Legal Affairs
- UNEP

47. In accordance with the seventh paragraph of the statement by the President of the Security Council of 16 November 2015 (S/PRST/2015/21) and pursuant to paragraph 22 of Council resolution 2256 (2015), of which the General Assembly took note in its resolution 70/227, the following evaluation has been planned:

- Evaluation of the work and methods of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

48. In order to ensure capacity to enable the consideration of ad hoc requests for evaluation from intergovernmental bodies or senior management, two entities will be subject to OIOS evaluation only if no ad hoc requests are received by December 2017, namely:

- Office for Outer Space Affairs
- Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

49. The following thematic evaluation has been identified for completion in 2018-2019:

- Thematic evaluation of preparedness and policy coherence of United Nations Secretariat entities and UNHCR to implement, monitor and report on their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals

50. In addition to the evaluations, as required by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/234, OIOS will be completing, in 2018, the following triennial reviews for evaluations completed in 2015:

- Triennial reviews of the implementation of recommendations from 2015 evaluations for UNHCR, UN-Women, UNCTAD, ITC, ECLAC, ESCAP and UN-Habitat

51. Tentatively planned evaluations in peacekeeping during 1 July 2017-30 June 2018 include:

- Evaluation of protection of human rights in peacekeeping operations
- Evaluation of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)
- Triennial review of the implementation of recommendations contained in the OIOS evaluation report on the enforcement and remedial assistance efforts for sexual exploitation and abuse by the United Nations and related personnel in peacekeeping operations

52. A further peacekeeping evaluation/review is to commence and to be completed in 2017:

- Triennial review of implementation of recommendations contained in the OIOS evaluation report on the implementation and results of protection-of-civilians mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations

VII. Follow-up on the recommended actions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination

53. In its consideration of the previous biennial report, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended, in paragraph 95 of the report on its fifty-fifth session (A/70/16), that the General Assembly should endorse the following recommendations contained in paragraphs 65-67 of document A/70/72:

(a) Entities that do not currently have an evaluation policy should develop one;

(b) In order to strengthen their overall evaluation capacity, all entities should ensure that key evaluation procedures are in place;

(c) The Department of Management, in consultation with OIOS, should improve the existing guidelines for planning and formulating the estimated

resources (regular budget and extrabudgetary) for monitoring and evaluation activities in the programme budgets.

54. As of the time of the preparation of the present report, evaluation policies have been developed by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Safety and Security and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. The Office of Legal Affairs is in the process of finalizing its evaluation policy, which is currently in draft form. The United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna have agreed to work together on drafting a common policy.

55. The current status of adoption of recommended procedures was assessed based on documentary evidence that relevant procedures had been formally instituted and/or had been shown to be in use. With regard to:

(a) Developing an evaluation workplan, all entities except the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Counties, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Offices at Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure;

(b) Developing action plans for implementing evaluation recommendations, all entities except the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure;

(c) Tracking and/or monitoring the implementation of evaluation recommendations, all entities except the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure;

(d) Sharing and/or disseminating evaluation reports, all entities except the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of Legal Affairs, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure;

(e) Sharing and/or disseminating lessons learned from evaluation, all entities except the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Offices at Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure;

(f) Feeding evaluation results back into programme planning and implementation, all entities except the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of Legal Affairs and the United Nations Offices at Nairobi and Vienna submitted evidence of this procedure.

56. The Department of Management and OIOS have worked together to improve the existing guidelines for completing Form 12, i.e., with respect to planning and formulating the estimated resources for monitoring and evaluation activities in the

programme budgets for 2018-2019. The revised guidelines provide entities with the following instruction:

> "Resources that are directly related to self-evaluation activities that result in evaluation reports should be reported as self-evaluation resources. All other assessment activities and related resources that do not result in evaluation reports should be reported under "Mandatory self-assessment/monitoring".

57. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/8 of 13 November 2015, endorsed, inter alia, the four recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as contained in the report on the work of its fifty-fifth session (A/70/16, paras. 99 and 104-106) that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to take concrete steps to develop capacity and strengthen the culture for evaluation throughout the Organization. In response to these recommendations and to Assembly resolution 70/255 of 1 April 2016, in which the Assembly emphasized the need to strengthen evaluation and its use as a means of improving performance, the Management Committee of the Secretary-General reviewed and discussed the challenges of strengthening evaluation at two of its meetings, on 12 May and 17 November 2016, where it was decided that OIOS and the Department of Management should work together to determine how evaluation might be strengthened. Through this report, OIOS has transmitted these pending recommendations to the office of the newly appointed Secretary-General for consideration and implementation, and will report on progress thereon in the next report in 2019.

VIII. Conclusions

58. The Committee for Programme and Coordination has emphasized the importance of a strong evaluation function as a critical tool for assessing the Organization's performance, through which accountability could be enhanced and lessons could be learned to achieve stronger results.[28] The current assessment has noted that although much progress has been made, some entities still lack an effective evaluation function: they either operate without an evaluation policy (four entities) or lack the necessary expertise (four entities). Several entities still fall short of proposed benchmarks established by the Joint inspection Unit in the allocation of resources. Consequently, entities are able to undertake only limited evaluation activities. Without the establishment of an evaluation policy and the allocation of dedicated resources for evaluation, including staff time and expertise, the evaluation function within an entity cannot develop.

59. Several entities that have established evaluation polices did not conduct evaluations for the period under review. Those entities either tended to be smaller in size or had management and support mandates. Efforts to strengthen the evaluation function in such entities should be strategic and tailored towards addressing the needs of these entities and the barriers preventing them from developing a more robust function relevant to their work.

[28] A/70/16, para. 96.

60. There is significant ambiguity in the relationship between the reporting of resources allocated towards evaluation and the conduct of evaluation that results in evaluation reports. Issuance of the new guidelines prepared by the Department of Management in consultation with OIOS for distribution to the budget and evaluation focal points aim at helping to ensure that evaluation workplans are better aligned with evaluation budgets, and that there is a clearer differentiation between monitoring and evaluation.

61. The importance of a strong internal evaluation culture cannot be overstated. As noted in prior reports, management support is a prerequisite for a strong evaluation function.

62. With the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as contained in document A/70/16, pending implementation, OIOS wishes to make one additional important recommendation aimed at strengthening evaluation budgeting.

IX. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (see sect. III, result D, para. 20):

63. **Budgeting of evaluation resources should be better aligned with evaluation plans, and evaluation outputs should better reflect such plans and budgets:**

Evaluation focal points should coordinate with budget focal points regarding the planned evaluation outputs so as to ensure the appropriate allocation of resources pursuant to the circulated guidelines.[29]

Responsible entity: all entities

Indicator of achievement: all entities' allocated resources for evaluation are commensurate with planned evaluation outputs.

[29] See sect. F of note entitled "Background on evaluation", available through the References tab at the budget website (http://ppbd.un.org/Ppbd_bi18/ReviewDates.aspx#).

Annex I

List of entities included in the report

1. Department of Economic and Social Affairs
2. Department of Field Support
3. Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
4. Department of Management
5. Department of Peacekeeping Operations
6. Department of Political Affairs
7. Department of Public Information
8. Department of Safety and Security
9. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
10. Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
11. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
12. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
13. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
14. International Trade Centre (ITC)
15. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
16. Office for Disarmament Affairs
17. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
18. Office of Legal Affairs
19. Office for Outer Space Affairs
20. Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
21. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
22. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
23. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
24. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)
25. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
26. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
27. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
28. United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG)
29. United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON)
30. United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)
31. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Annex II

Sampling methodology for evaluation reports included

Stratified random sampling was used to identify 100 reports for the quality assessment based on the number of evaluation reports screened in for each entity. The table below presents the strata used to determine the number of reports to be sampled for each entity.

Stratified random sampling tiers

Minimum number of reports screened	*Percentage sampled*
1	100
2-5	75
6-15	50
16-30	33
31-45	25
46-53	20

Annex III

Comments on the draft report received from Secretariat entities

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

The report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives in the United Nations Secretariat was received with appreciation. The results of the report for the period 2014-2015 are acknowledged.

The matter of evaluation was taken up by the Management Committee in May 2016. At that time, the Committee emphasized the importance of the evaluation function and, bearing in mind the requests of the General Assembly contained in paragraphs 15-18 of its resolution 70/255 of 1 April 2016, the Committee decided to revert to the strengthening of evaluation in the last quarter of 2016. In line with this decision, the matter was again taken up by the Committee at a meeting in November 2016, at which OIOS informed the members that, while the overall assessment of self-evaluation capacity across the Secretariat during 2014-2015 suggested that implementation of policies towards self-evaluation had improved, there continued to be a need to strengthen evaluation capacity in various entities. In light of views expressed on resource requirements and how best to provide direct support to departments and offices, the Management Committee agreed that management should develop a unified approach to strengthening evaluation.

Strengthening the evaluation function is in the 2017 agenda of the Management Committee. The Committee will consider further ways to strengthen the evaluation function, including a unified approach to developing and enhancing existing capacity.

The Secretary-General attaches great importance to building a robust evaluation function within the Secretariat based on appropriate policies, methodologies, plans, resources and best practices. In building this capacity, and with due regard to the operational independence of OIOS, the Secretary-General looks forward to the support and guidance of OIOS, as appropriate, and in accordance with its mandate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The reference to evaluation reports as an output: "Outputs" in the context of substantive departments like the Department of Economic and Social Affairs refers to those outputs under its mandated programme of work. As such, it is unclear if evaluation plans and reports fall within the same classification as the substantive outputs of the Department.

Department of Political Affairs

The Department of Political Affairs welcomes the report of OIOS on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives. We are thankful to our colleagues in OIOS for this report, which outlined areas of strength in delivery and identified priority actions required to ensure that the Department remains fit for purpose. To this end, the Department of Political Affairs took immediate steps to address areas

of improvement outlined in the evaluation, chief among which has been to recruit a dedicated evaluation function and allocate resources to oversee the development and implementation of evaluation plans and outputs.

We fully accept the recommendation emanating from the report with regard to ensuring that the budgeting of evaluation resources is better aligned with evaluation plans, and that evaluation outputs better reflect such plans and budgets. Our new evaluation capacity is working in close conjunction with OIOS to ensure that our policies are in line with the updated United Nations Evaluation Group Standards and Norms, in addition to keeping OIOS and colleagues in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office informed of future activities so as to ensure synergies in evaluation and sharing of recommendations and lessons learned.

I take note that the OIOS report classifies the Department of Political Affairs among entities with no evaluation unit, but with some evaluation activity (reference: para. 4, table 1). I would like to note that at the beginning of 2017, the Department of Political Affairs established a full capacity, at the Professional level and within my Office, dedicated to evaluation and assessment of the work of the Department, its impact and progress in implementation of our mandate. The staff member complements other internal resources that were traditionally dedicated to these areas within the established staffing table of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General (P-5 and General Service staff on a part-time basis).

Criteria for allocation of resources for evaluation

Resources for 2017 activities are allocated following the established governance process and approval of the Department of Political Affairs Learning and Evaluation Board, while taking into account differences in the purpose and types of evaluations undertaken, and the economies of scale that we intend to achieve given the very limited resources available to the Department.

The Department's 2017 evaluation plan will cover the priority areas outlined in annex A. Its focus is on evaluations and evaluative exercises (in-depth studies of lessons learned), more specifically on a midpoint review of the Department's Strategic Plan and Results Framework, evaluation of the impact of the governorate liaison officers project in Iraq and an evaluation of the preventive diplomacy efforts undertaken by the Department of Political Affairs in West and Central Africa.

Evaluation projects focusing on mandated activities reflected in the 2016-2017 strategic framework will utilize the resources allocated through the 2016-2017 regular budget. Broader evaluation involving United Nations partners will be funded from extrabudgetary contributions.

Within the regular budget, the Department's monitoring and evaluation funds in 2016-2017 are estimated at $278,300. The 2018-2019 budget proposal includes $212,300 for evaluation activities, despite a significant budget reduction faced by the Department, of over $1.1 million. Extrabudgetary resources for monitoring and evaluation funds in 2016-2017 are estimated at $33,300. For the 2018-2019 biennium, the resources proposed for evaluation amount to $99,500.

Assuming the sustainability of extrabudgetary resources and continuing donor support at current levels, we are committed to allocating sustainable resources for future evaluation activities to supplement our limited regular budget funding. In addition, as donor funding becomes available, additional resources will be allocated for self-evaluation and evaluation projects in 2017. Please see annex B for the details of the 2018-2019 budget proposal.

Going forward, the Department of Political Affairs is committed to working with OIOS to ensure that it institutionalizes effective, fit-for-purpose evaluation as part of its core functions to support mandate delivery.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to your attention that the Peacebuilding Support Office evaluations were incorrectly linked to the Department of Political Affairs based on the biennial programme plan and priorities, programme 2 (Political affairs), subprogramme 1 (Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts), where the Peacebuilding Support Office is also mentioned. You might wish to revisit observations and context in paragraphs 41 and 42 of the report.*

* This comment was addressed by OIOS in the final report.